

JANET C. INDA: BASQUE SHEEPHERDER'S DAUGHTER

Interviewee: Janet C. Inda

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Description

Janet Carrica Inda was born in Fallon, Nevada, in January of 1945. The daughter of a Basque sheepherder, she spent her childhood years in the small towns of Nevada before settling in Reno.

Proud of her Basque heritage (though her mother is Danish), Mrs. Inda speaks of her youth with gaiety and enthusiasm, cherishing fond memories of her earlier years in the sheep camps. She then describes the drastic changes of moving from the country to the city, and how living in both worlds affected her adult life.

Intent on maintaining Basque culture in America, Janet Inda served as both secretary and treasurer for NABO (North American Basque Organization, Inc.) and went on to fill the presidency for two years. She is currently vice-president of NABO as well as a member of the Reno Basque Club. She has also worked voluntarily for the Basque Studies Program at the University of Nevada, Reno, and taught Basque cooking at the YWCA. Mrs. Inda's particular interest lies in teaching children of their Basque heritage.

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An Oral History Conducted by Christy Anne Webber

University of Nevada Oral History Program

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PREFACE TO THE DIGITAL EDITION

Established in 1964, the University of Nevada Oral History Program (UNOHP) explores the remembered past through rigorous oral history interviewing, creating a record for present and future researchers. The program's collection of primary source oral histories is an important body of information about significant events, people, places, and activities in twentieth and twenty-first century Nevada and the West.

The UNOHP wishes to make the information in its oral histories accessible to a broad range of patrons. To achieve this goal, its transcripts must speak with an intelligible voice. However, no type font contains symbols for physical gestures and vocal modulations which are integral parts of verbal communication. When human speech is represented in print, stripped of these signals, the result can be a morass of seemingly tangled syntax and incomplete sentences—totally verbatim transcripts sometimes verge on incoherence. Therefore, this transcript has been lightly edited.

While taking great pains not to alter meaning in any way, the editor may have removed false starts, redundancies, and the “uhs,” “ahs,” and other noises with which speech is often liberally sprinkled; compressed some passages which, in unaltered form, misrepresent the chronicler's meaning; and relocated some material to place information in its intended context. Laughter is represented with [laughter] at the end of a sentence in which it occurs, and ellipses are used to indicate that a statement has been interrupted or is incomplete...or that there is a pause for dramatic effect.

As with all of our oral histories, while we can vouch for the authenticity of the interviews in the UNOHP collection, we advise readers to keep in mind that these are remembered pasts, and we do not claim that the recollections are entirely free of error. We can state, however, that the transcripts accurately reflect the oral history recordings on which they were based. Accordingly, each transcript should be approached with the

same prudence that the intelligent reader exercises when consulting government records, newspaper accounts, diaries, and other sources of historical information. All statements made here constitute the remembrance or opinions of the individuals who were interviewed, and not the opinions of the UNOHP.

In order to standardize the design of all UNOHP transcripts for the online database, most have been reformatted, a process that was completed in 2012. This document may therefore differ in appearance and pagination from earlier printed versions. Rather than compile entirely new indexes for each volume, the UNOHP has made each transcript fully searchable electronically. If a previous version of this volume existed, its original index has been appended to this document for reference only. A link to the entire catalog can be found online at <http://oralhistory.unr.edu/>.

For more information on the UNOHP or any of its publications, please contact the University of Nevada Oral History Program at Mail Stop 0324, University of Nevada, Reno, NV, 89557-0324 or by calling 775/784-6932.

Alicia Barber
Director, UNOHP
July 2012

INTRODUCTION

Janet Carrica Inda was born in Fallon, Nevada in January of 1945. The daughter of a Basque sheepherder, she spent her childhood years in the small towns of Nevada before settling in Reno.

Proud of her Basque heritage (though her mother is Danish), she speaks of her youth with gaiety and enthusiasm, cherishing fond memories of her earlier years in the sheepcamps. She then expresses the drastic changes of moving from the country life to that of the city, and how living in both worlds affected her adult life.

Intent on maintaining Basque culture in America, she served as both secretary and treasurer for NABO (North American Basque Organization, Inc.) and went on to fill the presidency for two years. She is currently vice-president of NABO as well as a member of the Reno Basque Club. She has also worked voluntarily for the Basque Studies Program at the University of Nevada, Reno and taught Basque cooking at the YWCA. Her particular interests lie in teaching the children of their heritage, which includes heading the music program.

This oral history was conducted, appropriately, at the Basque Studies Program of the University of Nevada, Reno in April and May of 1981. Mrs. Inda was an ardent speaker, anticipating my questions, thus little editing was necessary. Full of knowledge and laughter, she's not only a joy to speak with but undoubtedly a credit to the preservation of the Basque culture. The Oral History Program of the University of Nevada Reno Library preserves the past and present for future research by tape recording the memoirs of people who have been important observers of the development of Nevada and the West. Scripts resulting from the interviews are deposited in the special collections departments of the University libraries at Reno and Las Vegas. Janet C. Inda has generously donated her literary rights in her oral history to the University of Nevada Reno and has designated the volume as open for research.

Christy A. Webber
University of Nevada-Reno
1982

JANET C. INDA: BASQUE SHEEPHERDER'S DAUGHTER

Christy Anne Webber: We need some background information. Your parents came over to the United States?

Janet Carrica Inda: Both my parents came from Europe. My mother's Danish and my father is Basque. He came over in 1931 from Europe, from the French Basque Country. He came from Banca, a little village way up in the mountains. It's above Les Aldudes.

My husband comes from Les Aldudes and my father knew my husband's parents before he came to this country. It's kind of an interesting situation.

My dad spent two years in the French service. He got out of the French service the end of July, and the first of October his papers were ready to come to this country. So he came to Eureka, Nevada.

Right to Nevada?

Well, they went to New York. They came on boat and then he came across on train from there to Elko and then to the Segurra Ranch.

One of the men on the Segurra Ranch picked him up and took him to the ranch.

Did he know that's where he was going to be working?

Yes, he knew that's where he was coming to. He came on free papers because he had fulfilled his military service over there and he was guaranteed a job out in this country. So, he didn't have to worry about going back or anything like that. So, he came and he worked there for eight years and then he met my mother.

She didn't come with him, then?

No, my mother came to this country after she had graduated from teacher's college in Denmark and came here to the University of Nevada to get her American teacher's certificate. And, then she took a job on this big ranch, at the Segurra Ranch and taught out there.

And in those days no teachers were allowed to be married, so they were all young,

single, or older maids. They only had to have seven kids in the school to maintain a school out there. But it just happened that there were enough people working out on the ranch and they always made sure there were enough kids.

So Mom had her own little cabin next to the schoolhouse and she taught for a year and a half before my mom and dad were married. They got married in 1942. And because they were only allowed to be single, and although she had gotten engaged and they knew she was going to be married, Pierre Gezelin, at the time, Judge Gezelin - he's now passed away - was in charge of the school district in Eureka, and he allowed Mother to finish teaching that year. Then after they got married they moved into Eureka itself, and Daddy continued working at the ranch.

Then when my mother became pregnant with my older brother, Daddy decided that they should be in a bigger town, so they went to Fallen and bought a dairy. He thought maybe it was better to be close to town so he bought a dairy out in Sheckler District in Fallen, and that's where Louis was born. And a year later that's where I was born. So, we lived in Fallon for - well, we lived on that ranch and then Daddy just didn't like milking cows twice a day; that was too much. He just couldn't handle that at all, so they bought this big ranch out in Stillwater, with two other Basque men, and Daddy ran the ranch out there.

And at that time, because he had a going business, he brought one of his younger brothers over, named Mannus, my Uncle Mannus.

So Uncle Mannus was like a second Daddy to us; he was really sweet. He was scared to death of snakes and we used to tease him terribly with a little plastic snake that we owned, and we thought that was a big thrill.

But Uncle Mannus would do anything for us we couldn't talk our parents into doing. He was a doll. I'll never forget the man. He since went back to Europe and has passed away, but he was really a sweetheart. He was very easy going gentleman and very - had a lot of patience with us kids. He taught us how to write and he did all kinds of things for us kids, as well as worked on the ranch with my dad.

And then Daddy just couldn't take the ranch life and all the cows. He just really missed the sheep, so in probably around 1948 - I can barely remember Stillwater; I was about three and a half or four years old - Daddy moved back to Eureka. He couldn't get involved with the sheep right away so he worked in the mine, in Ruby mine, up there and my mother taught school out in Dixey Valley.

So, then Daddy would come every two to three weeks, home for the weekend. When the weather was good, we used to drive up sometimes and stay up in Eureka, 'cause that's where Mom and Dad got married and they had a lot of friends. So it was always fun to go back to Eureka.

So, we moved back to Eureka after Mother finished teaching that summer of 1950. And then I started school in Eureka. And at the time, we were living in town and Daddy and his uncle, Arambel, Beltran Arambel, decided that they would bring one of Daddy's other brothers over, named Jean Pierre, and that they would all go into business together.

So, they bought this big ranch and a bunch of sheep and we all moved out to Fish Creek, the name of the area where the ranch was. And we lived in Fish Creek with two other families - well, with Arambel, my great uncle (who) had gotten married. And he had two kids by - well, his wife had two kids by a former marriage, but at the time we didn't know - we were just little kids; we just

didn't understand that. So, Monique and Jean were my cousins. And also this other man, Ithurraldes, and they had two boys.

And all of us kids lived together. There were three houses; we didn't all live in one big house, so I should say we all slept in three different houses 'cause we really lived, we ate most of our meals in the big farm house. And that's where Monique and Monique's mom and dad lived, my great uncle and his wife.

And by then I was old enough to really enjoy all the goings on of a ranch. And we used to - my parents, I should say, because we were too small to do too much work - but my parents and the older people used to make wine. And Monique was about four or five years older than I was. (She was the oldest of all of us and her brother and I were the same age, and my older brother and Jimmy were the same age, and Bobby was my age, so we were all pretty close together.) But Monique used to get as all in a lot of trouble. Then she'd leave and we'd get caught and her mother was - I still - I respect the woman but I never liked her, to be honest. And she used to really get upset with us because we used to punch out the knot holes in the big vats that they used to make the wine in, and if it started to ferment we could really get high in a hurry.

But we used to do a lot of things. I can remember when the shearers used to come because there were too many sheep for the men around to do it, so the shearers used to come in the spring, and they were always gypsies. And we were fascinated by their way of life. And they got drunk every night and how they worked the next day we never knew. Anyhow, we'd do things for them and talk them out of money.

We had to go to school even when we lived on the ranch and in those days my mother was the one who drove us into school in the mornings; so she used to always make us

recite our homework to her as we were going in to school. Then, usually, she would come in and get us in the afternoon, or if one of the other women had to be in town, they would pick us up.

Eureka at that time, and still, is very small itself. Eureka's grown much because of many different things out there now, but at that time, first and second grade were together, and third and fourth grade were together. And high school was on the second floor to us so the home ec class used to cook the grammar school kids lunch. And that was always quite - we always thought it was quite a treat. I've never been too particular, really, too fussy about what I eat, so we always thought that was great fun, to have the high school kids make us lunch.

We had a lot of fun. We had a lot of friends in Eureka itself, so if it was bad weather and we couldn't go back to the ranch, we used to go stay at the Tognoni's house or one of Monique's aunt's house. We used to spend the night there so nobody would have to come in and pick us up. So we always thought it was great fun.

Then you did go to school when you were living on the ranch?

Oh, yeah, it all depended on how far away the ranch was from school, or how bad the weather was. I know one winter it was very, very bad, so we took a house in town so that we could stay in town, because usually they ran the sheep during the summertime up in the meadows. Windfall Canyon, which is right up above Eureka, was where our summer range was, so we could spend summers with Daddy at sheepcamp, but not during the wintertime if they had to take the sheep a ways for winter grazing. And sometimes the men weren't at the ranch either. One of the

men would stay at the ranch to take care of the animals that were there, so then it was just easier for all of us to stay in town and that way - you know.

Then your father would stay in town also?

No, he was usually out with the sheep. He was the camp tender, so he had to go around to all the shearers and take them food and stuff. So he would come in once every eight to ten days to pick up supplies and then he would go back out. So, we didn't, during the wintertime, see Daddy a tremendous amount and especially during lambing season, because he was extremely busy, or later on in the spring when they started to move the sheep up to the summer ranges.

He had to be gone so much because he had to be with the shearers and to help them move the bands from one area to another, or if they had to truck them (though in those days we didn't truck them as much; they just literally walked them the hundreds of miles from the winter range to the summer range). So, usually, around shearing and lambing season they were brought pretty close to the ranch so that they were kept around there, but then, if it was a dry year they had to haul water, and that was a twenty-four hour job for weeks and weeks at a time. Or, if it was really, really bad weather then they had to haul feed, hay, out to the sheep so they wouldn't starve. So during that period of time, even as I got older and we had moved then into Reno, those were the periods of time when we saw Daddy very little.

In fact, we saw hardly any of the shearers or my uncles or any of them 'cause they all had to be out. Once the sheep had hit summer range, then things got a little bit easier and by then school was just about out, so us kids could go and spend summer

up in sheepcamp with Dad. So, that's what we did, and that was, to me, the best part of the whole year.

Not just because there was no school.

No, I never really minded school. School was never bad; it was always a big adventure to me. I have never been an exceptionally good student, but I enjoyed the interaction of other kids; I'm a very social person. In fact, since the time I was a child, I enjoyed school, and the one-room school houses were always a big adventure to me.

I found that - I never really liked to read. My older brother was a book nut; he still is to this day. He can sit and read for hours and hours and hours. And I never was that type of a person; I was always an outdoors person. So to be in sheepcamp where I could go with Daddy and to be around the sheep or just to be in sheepcamp and watch my mother make bread or anything like that was much more fun for me than to have to stay inside and read.

When we were kids we didn't have that much homework to do so that wasn't a big problem, but I never really enjoyed living in town. I always enjoyed living out, whether it was on the ranch or it was at sheepcamp. We always had fun times.

I think I have always been Daddy's little girl and I think part of that was I was the only girl. I have an older brother who's a little bit over a year older than I am, and then I have a younger brother who's fifteen years younger than I am, so he's almost like my own. I was in high school when my younger brother was born. So I am the only girl and for so many years, during my growing up years, I was the baby of the family, and I was Daddy's favorite.

I got along pretty well. Even though I couldn't talk very well to the shearers, I always got along with them.

I enjoyed that kind of life. We raised the dogs and that was my responsibility, to make sure all the sheep dogs were well cared for, because they usually stayed at the ranch with us. And to start to get them trained when they were young. I think the hardest part was to then have to give them up to one of the sheepherders, because sheep dogs become a one man animal. And even after I had raised them, within a year they wouldn't listen to my commands. And, I think that probably was one of the hardest things. But it was always fun to go back and see the dogs. And, you know, I had named them one thing and the sheepherders had named them another.

It was a lot of fun and my dad was always very willing to take me with him, especially if he didn't have to be overnight. It wasn't until I got to be in my early teens did I get to go overnight with Daddy when they went backpacking into the mountains with the sheepherders.

But it was always a big thrill for me and I enjoyed it. We learned how to fish with a twenty-two and all kinds of things from the sheepherders - legal or not. You know, at that point of our lives we weren't too concerned with whether we got caught or whatever.

Of course, my dad had taught us how to shoot from the time we were five or six years old. For one, for our own protection, as well as, during the summertime, that was our evening entertainment; we'd sit and see how many bottles we could hit out of a hundred, or whatever we happened to have on hand.

But it was a very carefree time because we didn't have any responsibilities in the sense that we lived in a tent or we lived in a sheep wagon. I mean there's not too much house cleaning to do.

Did you do the cooking, then?

Oh, some of it, yeah. I enjoyed that kind of stuff, but Mother did most of the cooking when we were really young. Daddy always cooked the bread and I always found that very fascinating to watch,, to watch them put the bread in the big pits and cover them up with dirt,

And that's something I remember and we still do every Fourth of July. We have, a big party out at my dad's place and that's one of the things that we've always done. It's part of my past that I enjoy doing.

Did your mother have to learn to cook Basque style. then?

Well, Mother never really learned to cook Basque style what we think of as Basque food - because she never thought all that garlic and onion was quite necessary in all the food. Danish food, to my dad, was always very bland, so we used a lot of Tabasco sauce. But Mother was a good cook in the sense that she always cooked good food. So we really didn't have too much variety; how much can. you do with lamb when you're at sheepcamp and my dad kills two lamb every week? You make lamb roast.

And, of course, with no electricity or ovens, for the most part of it, so much of the meat, then, had to be cooked in dutch ovens on either an open campfire or a wood stove. You can't really do too much to lamb to destroy it. We ate good when we were kids. I won't say we didn't.

It was always a big treat for us to go to Elko and to go to a Basque restaurant because that was just part of going to Elko.

There was an older man who ran the Silver Dollar Bar. His name was Uncle Martin and he was our Uncle Martin; he was everybody's Uncle Martin. And Uncle Martin thought that it was better to have fun in life than it

was to make money, so Uncle Martin was never really too good of a businessman. But he was a dear and he always took care of us kids when my mom and dad had to go to the lawyer's or a doctor or shopping, or whatever. And it was always a big thrill because we went very seldom to Elko or Ely. And it wasn't until years later did I meet one of Uncle Martin's nephews, and marry him. But he was our Uncle Martin. And he was about, probably about five foot five and almost as wide. Ha was another of these men who had never married and always took great pleasure in taking care of us kids and making sure we had what we wanted. So at five o'clock if we wanted peanuts and my parents said no, we'd be sure Uncle Martin would give us peanuts.

So I have very fond memories of being a child and the fun things. And as a youngster, many, many of our friends were Basque. It was a way of life I didn't really appreciate until I got much older and we had moved in here to Reno. And I realized everybody wasn't just open and as honest and as generous as these people who had been part of our lives for so many years. So it was something that instilled in me a great love for - I won't just say the old-timers, because there were a lot of young people who were involved. But they had the same ideas and ideals as their parents had, and most of their parents were also European born. So it made it easier for them to understand our way of life and for us to understand theirs; because for the most part, it was all the same, more or less.

The other camptenders were Basque?

Oh yes. In fact, my dad was a camptender and both of his brothers were sheepherders and we had a couple of other Basque sheepherders. We were lucky in the sense that, when I got older, we had more Spanish

Basque sheepherders, and then, toward the end, we couldn't even get the Spanish Basque sheepherders. And that's one of the reasons why the sheep business has gone, that and a lot of other regulations as far as BLM is concerned and grazing rights, and those things. But in those days when I was little, we had - we were very involved in sheep and the Basque people were very much a part of our [lives].

Then you heard a lot of Basque spoken around you?

Well, we heard a lot of Basque spoken but, unfortunately, we never learned any of it. Or French, they didn't speak French. Among the Basques, among themselves, they spoke Basque. But because my mother was Danish and she knew English and my dad knew English, English was spoken in our home. And when we lived out at Fish Creek, it was also spoken out there, because we all had to speak English in school. And Monique and Jean did not know how to speak English until they started school, so it was for their benefit that we always spoke English.

And, of course, at that time I didn't realize what I was doing to myself, not learning a foreign language. So we never really did and I never took any interest. And Daddy was always so busy and Uncle Mannus wanted to learn English and Jean Pierre also, so we always spoke English to them. And if we couldn't communicate that well in English, we would always tell Daddy and Daddy would tell them in Basque and then he would get the answer from them and he would tell us in English.

So it just never really dawned on us as kids that we really should learn it, and I regret it very much today. And yet, I have tried, to instill that feeling in my daughter and have

gotten nowhere, so it's something that you don't see the need for at the time. And then as you grow up in later life and you realize how much you could have used it, by then it's too late, for the most part. So we never learned it.

Then in later years before we gave up the sheep, we had a lot of Spanish Basque herders and so we heard Spanish spoken more than Basque, because Daddy spoke Spanish, so he would speak Spanish to the herders. So we never really heard a lot of Basque then. And it wasn't until I got married to my husband did I really hear, over a period of time, a lot of Basque spoken. Because Basque was spoken very, very seldom in our home, because with Mother speaking English, even when we lived on the ranch when I was tiny and my uncle lived with us, he wanted to learn English; so English was always spoken to him. So we just never really... And he would have had the patience to have taught us Basque if we had been old enough to realize the necessity of it. But I guess it's only a necessity if you stay involved in it, and for so many of them, they don't stay involved in it, as they get into American occupations, with American friends, and so it's really a very sad thing.

After all, it's a very difficult language to learn, and I think if you learned it as a youngster you'd probably be a whole lot better off than trying to learn it here at the university, as I've tried and haven't mastered. Of course, everybody keeps telling me I haven't given it enough time either, but that's another part.

No, we didn't hear that tremendous amount of it, though I remember Daddy talking to the shepherders. But I was always so happy to be out and wandering around and picking the flowers and whatnot that I never really got too enthused or involved in being really serious about it. So, unfortunately, I never learned any of the language at all. I can understand a little in a conversation, what

they're speaking, especially if they speak French Basque, but for ever becoming fluent in it, I don't think that's ever a possibility.

There were a lot of' Basque kids then?

In Eureka there were a lot of Basque kids. I would say probably half of our friends were Basque and mixtures of Basque and Italians, because Cardinellis and people like that in Eureka were Italian. So we saw - we had a lot of ethnic - not necessarily just Basque - but a lot of European-born families, to where all of our ways of life were very much the same. So nothing was really strange to us. Their way of life wasn't much different than our way of life, so we never really thought about how good we had it until after.

When I was in the third grade - well, in-between the time I was in second and third grade - my dad and his brothers and uncles sold out. Or my two - how should I put it? My dad and his two brothers sold out to their uncle. And we went up to Deephole which is up above Gerlach. And up there was a very rude awakening, because nobody up there was Basque. And all of a sudden life became a little bit strange to me, though we lived on a big ranch, and we had both sheep and cows. My mother cooked for about, between fifteen and twenty cowboys everyday. And it was an interesting way of life, and it was a ranch and we had the sheep and the sheep dogs and whatnot, but it was a much-I don't know - I shouldn't say stricter way of life, because it wasn't strict in that sense; it was a much more regimented way of life, because it wasn't - you know.

We were never too sure about the cowboys, where, when we were younger and we were involved in sheep and it was our own family, we could relate better to them, and it was just a much easier way of living. We never

thought anything if we wanted something, or needed something, to ask even one of the shepherders that weren't related to us, for help. Where, when up in Gerlach, it was a little bit different, because so many of the cowboys were drunks and they were kind of wild and woolly people. So, it just was a lot - I don't know the word I want to use.

Less familiar, less homey

Yeah, it was less of a family, I guess I should say, because although, like I said, before, many of the shepherders weren't related to us, we considered them family. We either called them Uncle or some endearing term because they were Basque, and probably my dad knew them from Europe or knew their families. So it was more a [family].

And, then, they understood us better because they had been raised in the same way, so it was a little bit easier to get away with a lot more, too, than by the time we had moved to Gerlach, though I enjoyed living up in Gerlach on that ranch. It was a fun time.

Were you there very long?

Let's see. I was there for about a couple of years, I guess.

But my mother had to drive us everyday into school, and it was just really hard, and Daddy thought that we should be a little bit closer to doctors and stuff like that. And then it really was hard on my mother, because she had to do the cooking three times a day, and it just my dad felt that it was too much, too much work for my mom. And by that time it was getting a little bit harder to have both sheep and cows, because it's been a standard argument that the sheep destroy the grazing for the cows. So it became exceedingly difficult to run steep up in that area.

So we moved to Sutcliffe and my dad managed big ranch up at Monte Cristo which is right above Pyramid Lake. And during the summertime we lived up on the ranch with him and during the wintertime we lived down in Sutcliffe itself, in a big house. That was a lot of fun; that was another adventure.

For me moving to all the different places during my childhood was one big adventure after another. I think the only thing that I really missed was having to give up my friends. But it was always fun to go to someplace else and meet somebody new.

My older brother wasn't as outgoing as I was so he found it much more difficult, plus he didn't like the ranch life. He didn't like to have to feed the animals and I guess that was lust part of my makeup, because I enjoyed it.

Were you given more chores as you got older?

Oh yeah. Yeah. We started out having one or two bummer lambs and as we got bigger we had the responsibility of taking care of all the livestock on the ranch.

And as we got older, when we got to Monte Cristo, we were allowed to have our own horse. Daddy, of course, always had horses and we had learned to ride and could always ride his, but it was always a big thrill to have your own horse. And ray horse was a mustang. My very first horse was a mustang that this old cowboy who lived down by Sutcliffe had caught as a young colt. And it had had a hurt leg, and he nursed it back to health, so he got it tamed, and he gave it to me as my first horse. It was a small horse, but it was a lot of fun. It had a mind of its own.

Up in Monte Cristo there's a tremendous amount of snakes and we were never allowed to go out of the house without wearing these eight inch high boots, because of the amount of rattlesnakes that was up there. And that

horse thought it was almost as much fun as us kids did to go and find snakes under rocks, and he wasn't scared of them at all. My brother's horse was very scared of snakes. He would shy and buck and take off in the other direction.

I called my horse Cocoa. She was really funny. She would stand right there while we turned over rocks and the snakes would come out and she just wouldn't budge at all; she was really a good little horse. I had her for many years. She moved with us quite a few times before I finally left her down on a ranch, down in Fallon with some friends.

How old were you when you first got your horse?

I was in - I was about ten, nine years old. I was in third grade. Yeah, about ten when I first got my own horse. And I had that horse for - well, it died quite a few years ago, by now, but I had it - I kept it once we moved in here to town, when I started eighth grade. I kept it down on the Laca Ranch down in Fallon. They had little kids and by that time, it was getting older and the kids rode it and it stayed down there, because I had no place to keep it up here. And, then I didn't have the time, too, as I got older and got involved here in Reno in other things. But, I have pictures of it. It's neat.

You lived in Sutcliffe for quite a while then?

No, we only lived in Sutcliffe a couple of years because they were going to close the school, because there weren't enough kids.

So, then, Daddy went into partnership with Salvador Urrutia in Wadsworth, which isn't too far away from there and that's where I went through school: fourth and fifth and sixth and part of seventh grade.

And we lived right down on the river there, right close to the Indian reservation. And, of course, those were the same Indians that we had known when we lived in Sutcliffe, because they ran all their cows with us, so it wasn't like moving to some strange place, because I already knew the kids.

And it wasn't a one-room schoolhouse, but three or four grades were in the same class. It was a really neat experience for me.

I have - at that time, I had very black hair and very thick, and I used to wear it in long braids, so I just fit in with the Indians just really well. Nobody really knew the difference.

And I had a lot of - in fact, I still have a lot of those friends that I went to school with there, and I still see them.. And a couple of them work with my husband, a couple of the Indian boys.

But it was a fun time. It was closer to town. We lived just right on the edge of Wadsworth, and Wadsworth was, at that time, and now is even less of, a little town. It was a peaceful place. It was very - I don't know. It was a great place to grow up. Because we were close enough to Reno, so that if we ever wanted to come into town to see a movie or go shopping, we weren't very far away. And yet we were far enough away from the big town that it really didn't engulf us in the rat race of what living in a big town was concerned.

And everybody knew everybody else. The Saturday night dances at the schoolhouse or the pot lucks at church, or things like that was an affair that the whole community went to, and the whole community knew everybody. So, it was a much - a very neat way to grow up, as far as I was concerned.

And, then, of course, I'd always gone to a small school. In Gerlach there was two or three grades together there. And in Sutcliffe, it was a one-room schoolhouse.

And our teacher in Sutcliffe - she just passed away last year. Her name was Mrs. Gritton and she was a sweetheart. That woman used to drive from Reno everyday out there to teach, and she'd cook for us. She taught us how to cook all kinds of things.

Our schoolhouse was a railroad car, a passenger car that had been changed into a school. And there were two of them together. The front one was our school room and then the back one was where we had lunch and where she taught us how to do leather craft. Our little library, fifty books, which we thought was fantastic, was there.

And she was just one neat lady. She taught us so much. She was a very big influence. In fact, I kept in contact with her after we moved from Sutcliffe until just a few years ago when she had a stroke and could no longer speak. But she was a marvelous lady. She taught us all kinds of things. She was very interested in the Indians. She taught us how to do bead work and she brought in some of the older Indian people from Nixon to help us and to teach us the different designs - what the different designs meant. And she tried to instill, in the Indian kids that were in our school, how important their heritage really was, and that they shouldn't take it so blasé, and that they should understand. And it was really good because I felt, in many respects, the same as they did, because growing up as a Basque as I was growing up, was not - you know. In the past ten years ethnic has become something very popular to be but in those days it wasn't. So, it was neat to have her.

She had two kids of her own that she used to bring with her so that there would be enough kids in that school in order to keep it going.

In fact, a couple of the kids, when they closed that school, went to Wadsworth with us. Their folks were - at that time one was

stationed in Sutcliffe for the railroad, and so they just moved them to Wadsworth. So, when we went to Wadsworth, it was like our whole [group again]. We would have wanted Mrs. Gritton to come with us but she didn't do that. She came in here to Reno and taught school here in Reno.

But when we got to Wadsworth we had first, second, and third together; fourth, fifth, and sixth together; and seventh and eighth together. And then high school kids went to Fernley to school - were bussed to Fernley.

Seventh and eighth weren't like junior high school?

No, we were all in the same school.

And you had one class, one teacher only?

For seventh and eighth grade, yes. In fact, the teacher of the seventh and eighth grade class was also the principal. And I cannot think of his name. He was a great big man and we were scared to death of him, because he used to paddle the kids when they were bad, and the paddle hung out in front of his door, and we had to walk by it every morning. It gave you a healthy respect for that gentleman. Yeah, he was quite a character, that man.

But I had a really neat teacher there while I went through fifth and sixth grade. Her name was Mrs. Castile and she had been a missionary in Pakistan for many years. Of course, she had many interesting tales to tell us. And I was the only white girl in that class; all the rest of them were Indians.

You did alright?

Yeah, I was never - because I never looked down on the Indians, they were my friends and that was as far as it went. I can

remember as I got older and thinking about being prejudiced, that if they wanted to be prejudiced they could have been toward me, because I was the only white girl, though I looked very Indian.

I was involved in several Indian pageants, once when I was in Sutcliffe and again when I was in Wadsworth. And nobody could distinguish me from not being Indian because I was very dark and I had very black hair. So it was very you know.

I'll never forget once when we had an Indian pageant out in Wadsworth. I'm not sure what the gist of the story was, any longer, but three of us girls were sitting and we were weaving a rag and some people from back east came and they patted me on the head as if Indians didn't know how to speak English and said, "Isn't she a beautiful Indian girl?" And I wanted so badly to say, "I'm sorry, but I'm as white as you are." But we all just sat there and looked at each other and smiled and kept working away. But I'll never forget that. I thought to myself then, "How strange for those people to be so patronizing of us without realizing what I was. That they could be so condoning, so condescending of the Indians." Because I had known Indians all my life and I had never thought them any different than we were. They spoke this funny language, but so did my parents, or my dad.. So, I never thought really anything of it.

I have been very lucky, in the sense that, I have always been able to accept people for what they are not who they are. I have had many, many friends who have been different nationalities and different cultures and different religious beliefs and it has never - they have always accepted me for what I was so it was no different for me accepting them for what they were.

Then your camp was pretty close to the town of Wadsworth when you lived there?

Yeah, well, we lived right on a ranch. We lived right at home base, on the ranch, because by that time Daddy ran the ranch and right down there were cows, and then we had sheepherders and camptenders who went out. So, the camptender would come down to the ranch to pick up the supplies. So Daddy, from then on, did not have to leave very much; he was home most of the time. And they lambled right there on the ranch. So it was a lot easier. Daddy was with us all the time. And by that time my uncle, Uncle Mannus, had gone back to Europe so he was no longer living with us.

There weren't very many Basques?

No, in fact, then we had two Peruvian sheepherders and one Spanish Basque sheepherder. We didn't really come in contact [with the Basque language].

And Salvador was married to an Italian lady and they spoke English at home and I went to school with their two kids, so English was spoken then all the time. In fact, I remember very few times of Daddy speaking Basque except like when we went someplace and there were Basque people. But, otherwise, I don't remember too much Basque being spoken between those years - from the time that we left Eureka until we got here to Reno. And then we had a lot of Spanish Basque sheepherders and for the most part, they spoke Spanish.

So, in 1958, I had just started the seventh grade and my older brother had just started the eighth grade, and Daddy decided that we should get a good education, that these one-room schoolhouses weren't good enough. Because he did not get a good education and he felt it was very important so we moved in here to Reno. And we moved out on South Virginia to a big ranch that is no longer there, because they took it for the Meadowood Mall.

We lived there for about three years; so I went through seventh and eighth grades and started high school, until I was a sophomore in high school.

By then my mother had my younger brother and it was difficult for her to transport us back and forth to school. So, we bought a house up here close to Manogue. We went to Manogue High School. And we bought a house up there so us kids could walk, my older brother and I could walk to school.

But, that was home base down there. And they had started to take land down there from where we lived so home base became - they kept part of the ranch as home base and during the summertime we ran sheep up on Mount Rose and up above Hunter Lake, up in that area. That was always a lot of fun because Daddy always ran around in a jeep from summer Camp or winter camp to us, so it was always easier to travel then, cause we didn't have to go on horses.

We stayed during the summertime up above Hunter Lake in Big Meadows, it's called. We had two little cabins and us kids stayed in the tent and that was always a big thrill to get out of Reno and go back up to sheepcamp.

My older brother always had excuses of why he had to stay here in town, so my mother spent a lot of time, those last two years we had sheep, in town with my older brother. But I spent a lot of time up in sheepcamp with my dad, and by then I was old enough where Daddy would let me go on overnight packing trips with him.

We saw the bears and things like that up there. And the few times that I was left at sheepcamp for one reason or another (if somebody was going to come out or Daddy just didn't think I should go with him because the sheepcamp was too far away or something) and I was there by myself, I always had to stay in one of the buildings. And you

could lay there at night and hear the mountain lions crying. And I'd be so scared, I wouldn't know whether I should turn the light on or whether I should just lay there in the dark an hour and make sure I had my gun ready. I never did have to shoot them. I don't think they ever really would have come in too close to the camp, because we always had dogs and the dogs always barked when they came in close to the camp.

We could hear the coyotes howl. and the mountain lions. I never really was afraid of the animals because I had seen them all through our growing up years; so the animals we kind of... In fact, it was kind of interesting and intriguing, like when we were riding and. we'd come across a mountain lion, because they were as scared of us as we were of them. If you left them alone, for the most part, they would never come after you.

The bears were a little bit more aggressive. They'd sit in the middle of the pathway and our lead mule whose name was Rose, she'd start smelling those animals; they'd be near, and she would just go crazy. There were many times when Rose would just take off in the wrong directions and so did the other pack mules. Some days my dad spent all day just hunting down the pack mules and they didn't quite get to the sheepcamps when they were supposed to.

I remember our sheepherders telling us stories' about these great big huge bears. They'd have us scared half to death and then we'd see these animals and, of courses the bears that lived up there, probably, standing on their hind feet, looking up at you, weren't more than about three or four feet tall. So, it was kind of a great disillusionment to see the animals, really, after somebody else had been telling us how huge they were.

But, they did a lot of damage, the bears did, and the mountain lions did too. They

would - especially when we would first take the sheep up in the late spring-early summer; the little lambs were easy prey for them. and they might kill three to five of them a night. So, it was always - we never went away from camp without a gun. and we always had, my older brother and I had, twenty-twos and my dad always packed a thirty/thirty. And when we rode we usually packed a thirty/thirty just as much for our protection as for the protection of the other animals.

But I have [shot] on occasion when we - much more so when we lived up in Gerlach than any other place - at bobcats and mountain lions.

Snakes?

Snakes - you never really shot a snake because the chances of the bullet ricocheting off a rock was pretty great. But we used to take - my older brother always carried a machete with him. And that was the big thing, to try and see who could cut the heads off. We weren't scared of them. Now, I'm a little bit more leery of trying to find a rattlesnake than I was then, but when we lived, like up at Monte Cristo, we would kill literally hundreds of rattlesnakes during the summertime and wouldn't think anything of it. It was just part of a way of life. I mean, we knew - we always carried a snakebite kit with us. My mother snowed us how to use them and everything in case we needed to use them.

But, the only snake that ever bit me was my pet bull snake, and then my dad killed it. My mother was absolutely furious. We had caught this bull snake as a baby and we kept it in a cage for a long time and it was very friendly, and, so, then we got brave and we'd let it out of the house. It would slither.

(We lived upstairs. The house in Monte Cristo was a big dude ranch at one time and

it had these great big huge fireplaces and it was really a neat ranch to live in. It was really fascinating. My mother was a very educated lady and she did a lot of research on the places we were, so we always knew the history of all the places we were at. So Sutcliffe and Monte Cristo held really a great fascination for us.)

So we used to let that snake all over the house. And it was forbidden to go in the kitchen. That was - mother was never too fond of snakes, anyway, much less in the house and in her kitchen. It was a definite no-no. So, one day she got mad and she was shooing it with a broom and I guess the snake was scared and I went to pick it up and it bit me. So that night when my dad came in from riding the cows, my mother told him and Daddy killed it right then. He said that the chances of it - that it wasn't good once it bit us; it wasn't good to have around. And we thought that was just terrible. God, for days I can remember being really upset with my dad for killing my pet bull snake. And he tried to talk us out of trying to find another one to make a pet out of, either.

But, we used to have rattles, when we killed the rattlesnakes. That was the big thing, to sell them to the Indians because the Indians would use them as medicine. That was the big thing. That's how we used to earn our spending money, during the summertime up at Monte Cristo, killing, the rattlesnakes for the Indians.

You never ate the meat, though?

I have eaten rattlesnake meat, yeah. Yeah, yeah. We had a dear friend then. Her name was Amy James. When all of the men were riding and her husband and her sons were riding un there, we had killed a couple of snakes and she had one of her boys skin them and she cooked them for us. And it really is good..

A lot of that is all in our head, but I guess, of course, we learned, from the time we were youngsters. We never wasted anything on our animals. We ate the heads, and liver, and heart, and all of it.

And morcillas?

Yeah, and morcillas. Well, morcillas didn't come until later life. (Laughter) I enjoyed eating the blood sausages as a youngster. I never really knew how to make them because they usually were made by the other Basque women and given to us. But it wasn't until I was married, did I really get into the making of morcillas.

But we learned from the time we were kids that you just didn't waste anything. And we cleaned the pigs guts for chorizos when we were little kids. I never liked that job then and I like it even less now. I think it's cheaper to go to the butcher store and buy them than it is to spend the hours and hours and hours it takes to clean them. But those things get instilled in you as a youngster. You know, we ate lamb fries and lamb tails, and that was just part of lambing season that we all looked forward to, to get the lamb tails and the mountain oysters.

But my brother, he was never too enthused, my older brother. And my younger brother came along too late in my Dad's sheep career that he never did get too used to it, either. Oh, he loves the chorizos when we make chorizos, in the wintertime. But as far as eating morcillas and the lamb tails and the lamb fries, he's not exactly... He is a typical American kid raised in town.

And I have a daughter who I've tried my damndest not to allow that to happen to, but, unfortunately, it happens anyway. There's no way to - when you don't have it to give to them or be able to show it to them and they can live it for any length of time, it's difficult.

My cousins, who still live in Eureka, ask my daughter to go out and spend some time there, and she gets to go out to the ranch to Monique's step-father and mother, and out to Jimmy's parent's ranch. And, so she gets to see a little bit, but she will never be as enthused about it or as willing to do it as I ever was and still am.

I would give up our home on Plumb Lane any day of the week if I could move back to another ranch. But that's not possible.

Your father was pretty thoughtful of the family, moving for the kids to get a better education and so your mother wouldn't have to work so hard.

Well, that was something that was instilled in them growing up. They had to work at home because the Basque country was a very poor place and they worked... Each family had such a small area to work that the kids weren't able to go to school an awful lot. So Daddy didn't go too much past the third grade. And he always felt that being a sheepherder and living that lonely life was - he wanted something better for his family.

He finds it even hard to this day, because he owns a little ranch down in Fallon. He's retired, and he's got sheep and he finds it very hard that I enjoy going down there to do... Oh, it's physical labor, granted, but it's a completely different way of life; I can get away from my phone, I can get away from all of it. And like he said, he would rather have had an education so he could have done something different, but, you know, that just wasn't his way of life.

It must have been hard moving from a small town like Wadsworth to a city like Reno.]

Yes, it was. For one, we never had TV until we moved to Reno. So I didn't see TV as a

daily occurrence until I was in the middle of my seventh grade. And I moved from a class that together (seventh and eighth grade) was twenty-two kids, to Our Lady of Snows school that had forty-five in my seventh grade class alone.

I'll never forget when I graduated from eighth grade and they said something about all of us, and they said how quiet I was. And I think back to those days and think, "I wasn't quiet; I was scared to death." I really was scared to death. It was a completely different way.

Like in Wadsworth - and that was really the only town we lived where I was big enough, where I could come and go as we wanted - we never had to worry about being in before dark or don't talk to strangers, or anything like that. I mean, if we wanted to go somewhere and my parents couldn't take us or they wouldn't take us, we'd go get one of the Indian boys. We could ride down the river a couple of miles, and Amy's kids were bigger than we were so they would drive.

I knew how to drive from the time I was five - six years old and we drove the trucks all over the ranch. Of course, you didn't have to drive in Wadsworth; it wasn't that big.. You could walk to anyplace you wanted to go. But if you wanted to go to Fernley to a show or to a game, we'd either get one of Amy's boys to drive us or we'd go up to the country store and we'd ask one of the boys there if they would run us over to Fernley so we could see a ball game or whatever. We weren't scared; there was no need to be scared.

And, then, when we moved to Reno, it was like dropping a martian in the middle of a big city. I didn't know how to act. I couldn't wear my jeans and cowboy hoots; I had to wear a uniform with a skirt. It was just a completely different way of life. And it wasn't that I became quiet; I was shell shocked for several

years. It took me quite a while to get used to it. And it was - I don't think I ever really got used to it.

None of the other kids were from a ranch?

No.

Did they envy that in you, want to come out and ride your horse?

No. Well, they didn't envy it because I don't really think they knew what they were missing. They thought it was fascinating.

I remember in the eighth grade, we took a day and went out, because we lambled right outside of Dayton, down on the river. And I took the whole class for a fieldtrip and we went down there. And for some of these city kids to see this big operation of thousands of sheep having little ones, and the sheepwagons - they just couldn't visualize it; it was like another world to them. I kept telling them that their world was just the same to me. They couldn't understand that we had responsibility; we had sheep to feed and animals to care for, and stuff like that, And they couldn't understand why I didn't enjoy spending summer swimming; I'd rather go to sheepcamp. But it was a way of life I knew, I guess.

Did you ever have gardening or anything else besides the sheep?

Oh, yeah. We always had big gardens, no matter where we lived. We always had big gardens and my mother always canned the food, It was one of these things where you didn't live close enough to a store to run and get a head of lettuce or a tomato or whatever. So, we always had big gardens and my dad would always start them, would get the ground ready, when he was home. And that

was part of our responsibility, to take care of that, and the chickens, and the rabbits.

We raised all of the meat that went to the shepherders. And by the time we got to Wadsworth, my mother and I used to make the bread for the shepherders, though by then we had two great big wood stoves in the kitchen.. We used to cook them in the kitchen because we never quite got the knack of cooking the bread underground without either undercooking or overcooking it.

But, no, the gardens - we have a garden today, in our backyard, at our house. And I can about five hundred jars of vegetables and fruits a year, just because that was our, my, upbringing, and I enjoy that.

You know all of the survival skills.

Well, I said that we could probably survive for a year without me buying most things, if something ever happened. We might not eat everything we wanted to eat, but we wouldn't starve. I've got meat, and tomatoes, and peaches, and pears, and beets, and string beans, and corn; we could survive. It wouldn't be a balanced meal every meal, but we could survive.

I always said from the time I was a youngster, "I could go back and live in the frontier days if they'd let me take the washing machine" because I never learned the knack of washing on a washboard; I always had bloody knuckles. That's the one modern convenience I just really feel I must, I should have.

My husband's brother is married to a European-born Basque and Mary Louise grew up in one of the small villages where there was no electricity and those kind of things, and they learned to knit. And she was taught how to sew beautifully and all of those things, and we've discussed it many times since and I've gotten married to brothers. We feel we could

go back and live in the olden days if we could take an iron and a washing machine. Those are the two things we've gotten so accustomed to.

Now, cleaning the tent didn't take very long; sprinkle a little water and sweep and you're done. But, the washing of the clothes was always - and Mother usually - because we didn't have to dress up at sheepcamp, we didn't have to worry about too many fancy clothes. We had one good outfit to go to town in, and for the rest of the time we ran around in jeans and T-shirts, or whatever. So we used to tie our jeans to a tree and just let them wash themselves in a creek. That didn't take too much. And Mother always - oh, about once every three or four weeks - would go into the laundry in town and do the laundry. That way, doing the laundry really wasn't too hard. I learned how.

In fact, I still have a couple of the irons we used to heat on the stove. I use one as a bookend and the other as a doorstop.

I don't ever want to have to use them again. If you got them a little too hot you had a rather brown spot (laughter). To jeans it really didn't matter too much.. You could get through with those pretty fast, but to the light colored shirts - and my dad always wore jeans and a white shirt whenever he went into town. But that was my mother's job. Us kids decided that the white shirts weren't part of ours. If you scorched your flannel shirt it wasn't too bad—the next time you washed it the brown usually came out. But the white shirts were never part of what I liked to do.

But it was fun. You were so close to nature and so close to the earth, that you really learned to respect it. And I knew how to tell when an animal was sick, or we watched so many lambs being born or cows or dogs, that it just becomes a way of life for you. I don't know; it's kind of hard to explain. And that

was something I found very hard when I came in here to Reno. Because we never thought of it as sex, as a three letter, bad word. It was part of life for us to watch an animal being born, to help it being born. I don't know - you just learn to accept it. It isn't something strange or not talked about.

So, I think that city kids miss a tremendous amount, in that sense, in that they don't know so much. I mean, we didn't know a lot of book learning when we came into Reno; I had a lot of catching up to do as far as learning how to diagram sentences. But, I mean, as far as being able to survive and to live, I could have survived and lived very well.

Now, my brother was delighted when we got into town. The library was that much closer to him and the chores were that much less for him, and he just adjusted to Reno much better than I did. Though in his later years he moved back down to Fallen because he didn't want his son to be raised in the fastness of Reno. So, a little bit, I guess, did stick with him..

But I have always felt that the world would be a lot better place if a lot more kids had grown up out of the city.

And we always made our own fun, too. We never had TV or Saturday afternoon matinees, or those kind of things. We built ourselves a treehouse no matter where we were and my dad helped us. Or, we had built a fort. And Daddy was always really good when we were up in sheepcamp, to make us in our own little fantasy world. We always needed this or that or the other, and he was always very good about helping as find the stuff or taking the jeep to get us a couple of big logs, or whatever, if he had time to take us. So, we always had plenty of things to do, so we never really found that we needed either company or a game or TV.

We always had a radio and that was just part of our life, the radio. And I'll never forget

listening to the "Lone Ranger." That came on Saturday afternoons at about four o'clock and nobody disturbed you. And that was one of our punishments; if we had not done what we should have done, we were not allowed to listen to the radio. And that was really our only contact with the world. My mom and dad would listen to the radio early in the morning to get the news, and we'd listen to the music; the radio was always on in sheepcamp. And we had a great big Zenith, trans-oceanic radio, and we could pull in stations from all over. So, it is to this day, my companion, much more so than the TV.. I could do without the TV, for the most part. But not my daughter.

So, you moved into a house near Manogue, and you've stayed in Reno ever since?

Yeah. And then we wintered down outside of Fallon and we lambd in Dayton.

The summer after I was a sophomore - well, the spring that I was a sophomore - my dad sold the sheep, because when Bill got involved with the government for nonpayment of taxes, he had leased so much government land and they pulled all the government rights away from him, so we lost our summer range (in Big Meadows).

So, we sold the sheep and then Daddy went to work for he decided that he didn't want a place of his own any longer and all the responsibilities. So, he worked for Silver Saddle Ranch, south of town, down here on Holcomb Lane. So, we moved back out, then, on the closest thing to a ranch I had seen since we really left the ranches and the wide open country. And we lived down there.

And we saw very little Basque or few Basque people, because Daddy had cows and there just wasn't that much. And I went to Manogue all four years.

And the ironic part of it was that my best friend that I went to Manogue with was a quarter Basque and I never knew he was Basque until years later after he joined the Reno Basque Club - did I realize he was Basque. And he always used to tell me, he said, "You know, I always wanted so bad to tell you I was Basque, but I was embarrassed to be Basque, and I was so proud of you, because you were always so proud of the fact that you were." And I said, "Well, that's what I am and I can't change it and why lie about it?" I had a name that was - my maiden name was Carrica and people couldn't say it, nor spell it, so they would always ask. But he had a very easy name so nobody ever questioned him. So, he didn't have to worry about it.

But, everybody knew. My older brother was always unhappy with me because I was such a loudmouth and I used to tell everybody I was Basque, so they knew if I was Basque so was he. It wasn't that he wasn't proud of being Basque, but the time when we were kids, it wasn't the thing to be, to be a foreigner. You were an American and to have foreign-born parents was not the neat thing to have. Now, everybody's on a culture kick, and, you know, to be an ethnic group is really the thing to be. But back in those days, the late fifties and sixties, it wasn't a popular thing. It never bothered me, for the kids to tease me, that I was a sheepherder's daughter.

Wasn't that mainly in the city though?

Oh, granted, yes. We found that when we came to Reno, other than when we were not. Because when we were out on the ranches or even in the small towns, people were very used to the Basque sheepherders and the Basque people, and they were considered to be very hard workers and very honest and trustworthy. The people really respected

Basques, who had been around a lot of Basques, but when you got into Reno and the bigger areas, it just wasn't, you know - the people didn't know the Basque people and what they were like. And they heard all these stories. Even in the Playboy magazines today there's always snide comments and jokes of the Basque sheepherders. It's just one of those things; it's like the Italians or the Polish. The Polish people are getting it even today. It was just one of those things.

But I was always proud of being Basque and, I guess, because I had such a happy childhood, that it never really bothered me that I was Basque. I just kept going in my own little way and direction and when it was time to do something ethnic or something like that, I always did it on the Basques. So, it was just one of those personal things with me more than anything else.

And I managed to get an A out of a Spanish class here at the university because we had to do a term paper on an author. So, I took Pio Baroja and our Spanish teacher was so intrigued at the thought that I'd knew anything about it, that I got an A — I don't think as much for content or Spanish, but that I pleased him, because he was interested in the man too. Yeah, it was to your advantage in some respects too.

And, I think, because I had such a happy childhood, because I enjoyed it so much, that type of philosophy carried forth through my adult life.. And I've always been very involved in Basque; and to try and preserve what's left of Basque in the United States for future generations..

I have a daughter who's twelve now, and when I think that if we don't do something drastic, by the time she has kids there won't be Basque; there won't be a culture left for these kids to enjoy. I'm very old fashioned in many, many respects and yet, very - I won't

say new fashioned but, I mean, I can go along with the trends and ideals and yet my life is patterned very much out of Basque and our heritage and our culture. I cook to the most extent, all Basque foods.

And now as NABO president, I travel a tremendous amount and that's one thing a typically Basque person finds exceedingly hard to accept - as an American woman, as they call me, that I can be head of a Basque organization.. Because Basques are very chauvinist men, and they feel their women belong in the kitchen and not out gallivanting around. Some of them find it extremely hard even after the second year. Now they smile a little more, but they used to glare a lot.

But, that's just one thing, you know. I'm very outspoken and outgoing, and was something I enjoyed doing, and it was a love from the time I was a child. And I just felt that if I could do it I wasn't going to allow anybody else to stop me. And I was very lucky, in the sense that, I married a European Basque who allows me to do a lot of these things; because many European Basque men won't allow their wives to go gallivanting around the countryside by themselves or with my daughter, or whatever.

I notice this happens often, too: your mother, though not Basque had to live a Basque life, too.

Yes, she did to a great extent. She really did. My mother was a very educated woman.. She got a teaching degree in Europe. She could speak five languages when she came to this country. She could read Basque fluently but did not understand a word of it, because she knew enough other languages to be able to read it. But she never took a desire into learning it. I think she tolerated it. I don't know whether she enjoyed it, but she tolerated it. And she taught us to be very proud. She

used to always tell us, "Well, you're half Danish." And I used to say, "Well, that's true, but my heart is Basque."

And ironic as it is, I never knew my father's parents; both my father's parents died many years ago, in fact, even before I was born.

My mother's mother came over to this country and we dearly loved Grandma. She was a delightful lady, And she thought that coming out to sheepcamp was like living in the 1800s. I mean, this primitive way of life! She was one of these - I shouldn't say prissy ladies, but she wore the corset with the bones in it that you laced yourself tight in. And, yet, Grandma was a very delightful lady. We looked forward to the three months about every five years that she'd come to visit us. And, yet, during those times she was there Mother would always make sure she didn't have to spend very much time in sheepcamp, because that just wasn't Grandma's bag. She couldn't understand. And she could never understand why I loved it so. She used to say, "But you get dirty and there's nothing to do."

My mother was very much like her and my older brother was very much like that; they enjoyed reading and they wanted the comforts of the home and the electricity.

And I always thought sheepcamp was a neat adventure. You could think of all these - let your imagination go wild. You could have all kinds of fun. It was just a way of life I loved and I accepted it for what it was, and I didn't expect too much of it.

But my mother used to knit. She used to knit beautiful sweaters for us to wear. But, she enjoyed sheepcamp for the work she didn't have to do and for the freeness that us kids had. She didn't have to worry about where we were, or if we were getting in trouble, or if something was happening to us, because a dog was always with us and we always had

to go together, Louis and I, my older brother. And she knew that if one of us got hurt, the dog, would come back to sheepcamp to get her. And she never left sheepcamp without us.

We were never left alone at sheepcamp. Or if I was left with Daddy I always went with him when he went out, either that or I couldn't stay; if he couldn't take me then I couldn't stay. After we got in here to Reno, I did spend a summer up at Big Meadows when Mom and Louis didn't go up. I spent one night a week up there by myself, because Daddy had to go on an overnight run to the sheepherders and he just felt it was too much for me. Other than that, we were never left alone and it was like one great big camping trip.

People say, "Oh let's go camping." And I say, "I've camped all my life." My husband says that too, to this day. He said he came over as a sheepherder and he spent many, many months camping, in fact, a few years, and the thought of going camping, for the fun of it is not his cup of tea. But we still have our bedrolls and our camp pots and our sheepherder tents and the big dutch ovens that we cooked in.

I have two dutch ovens at home that I cook in regularly. One I cook just bread in and the other I use for stew or french fries, or those kind of things. And we take them out to the ranch once a year and we burn off the accumulated grease on the outsides. I've got a lot of cast iron things that I dearly love.

The dutch ovens were used to cook underground?

Yes, in the dutch ovens, the bread was cooked underground or like if we were going to have a lot of people come, (usually during the summertime we'd have a couple of parties and a lot of people would come up) and Daddy would cut up all the necks, kind of like the stew pieces of meat, and we'd put them in the dutch oven, and we'd layer them with fresh

peppers, salt and pepper, or whatever we had, and put the lid on it and bury it like you do the bread. And two or three hours later you go and dig it up and it would be all done. And then we'd have lambchops.

In fact, we have a fourth of July picnic every year out at my dad's and he still does it. He does the bread and the stew, and my husband cooks the lamb, and fries it on the barbeque. And it's just a part of a thing we've done for probably twenty-five years. We've had a party every fourth of July and some of those people have been with us as many years as we've had the party. The kids have grown and their husbands or wives come with their kids. Some of the older folks are gone now but we still have it. And it's something I would hate to give up.

I would hate the thought of not having my Basque heritage to rely on, because it's been a lot of fun. It's given me a lot of opportunities. And, I think it's given me an advantage. In a way, there are relatively few Basques, and, in a way, it makes us unique. And, yet, as a Basque we are all very close.

It's really strange; I have gone places where I've known nobody and people know who I am, not because I'm president of NABO, but because I carry a Basque name. And they either know or they say, "Are you married to Michel from Pocominea?" Or they'll say, "You've got to be from the house of Indianonea," which is my father's home. And I'll try and say, "No, I'm not." And they'll say, "Yes you are, because there's a couple of Basques there that look just like you." And I didn't realize how much alike we looked until I was to my first cousin's in Bakersfield and he had some pictures of when one of his cousins got married in Europe, and a couple of those girls could be spittin' images of me. So, people who travel back and forth from Europe - and of course, the Basque Country is relatively small and so, they all know.

I met some people the other day who gave me a picture and they said, "I think you'll recognize this." And I said, "Where did you get this?" And they said, "Oh, we were at Jean Pierre's the other day and we took a picture." It was my husband's brother and his family. And they said, if you ever get to Reno be sure and give it to Michel Inda, and so we got it and it's a beautiful picture.

And as ironic as it seems, when I was doing that article for *Sunset* magazine in 1976, one of the photographers who was out with us said, "Oh, I went to the Basque Country last fall and I took some pictures of Monday morning market." So, we were looking through them for the fun of it, and all of a sudden, I was looking and I said, "My God, that's Marcel." And my brother-in-law, Marcel came running up and said, "No; that's Jean Pierre," their older brother. And Marcel and him look very much alike. So, they started looking in this picture and they found four of their friends, that they had grown up and gone to school with. And, you know, it just seems almost impossible that this photographer that I hadn't met until that morning and he had no idea that that summer before, that he was going to be doing a Basque story. We just found it very intriguing, all these Basque men at the market, and chattering away and there they all were. That's how small the Basque Country really is.

And that's how close the people are too.

Yes, everybody knows everybody and they don't - they always identify you with their house name rather than with your last name. And there are some - in fact, we had this friend for about five years and I thought his name [was something else]. And I thought, why do they call him that? Finally, it dawned on me. It wasn't his last name; it was his house

name. And I thought jiminy! But that's what they do.

I met some people in Chino last fall when we were down there for a convention and she said to me, "Are you front Indianonea?" And I said, "My dad is. Why?" And she said, "My grandmother was." So, you see, it's really a very, very small area that the Basque people come from.

And yet, they do not realize when they come to this country how far apart it is. Because my dad's sister came over two and a half years ago and she could not believe how far it was from Bakersfield, where her son lives, up here to Nevada, and all the open spaces, because there just aren't any open spaces in Europe, like that; there's just no miles and miles and miles of nothing. Every little crook and cranny in their places are used. And our backyard attests to it, if you ever see it and see our garden and all the fruit trees. Even my dad, with his little ranch - boy, he's got every little space possible used, because that's just so ingrained in them. They just don't have the area to waste.

I know you preferred the country life, but are you glad that you moved to the city?

My dream was always to marry a sheepherder and live on a ranch. And I got half of it. But, my husband's in construction so we have to live where his job is. But, yes, I have to be thankful my folks thought enough of our education to come close enough to get it. But, I regret the fact that my daughter cannot grow up in that same atmosphere that I grew up in.

I would like to be able to go back. That's why I enjoy so much, going down to see my folks; because Daddy's got a little place and he's got the pigs, and the cows, and the sheep, and all of that. And, although it's not many,

it's at least still a touch of what we had. And it's something. for my daughter; she can play with the little animals.

We sheared a couple of weeks ago. Oh, and we took a couple of her little girlfriends down and they could not believe, you know... They assumed milk came from a cow, that it comes out of a bottle, but they never realized how it got from that cow to that bottle in the store. So, my dad went out and milked a cow for them. And they just could not believe it! It comes out of the cow warm and foamy. And it was really... And my daughter's grown up with that. Because like I say, my dad was always on a ranch so she was used to the milk cow and to the baby animals.

I do regret living in town a lot. And the bigger Reno gets, the more I regret it. But, you know, we can't stand in the way of progress. I realize that we have to take the good along with the bad.

You might not have gotten as far in NABO or in Basque if you'd remained in the country, and yet, you wouldn't be as good at what you do, either if you hadn't seen the way the Basque life really is.

Right. Right. I think if I'd stayed in the country, I probably would never have gotten involved in the Basque organization and that kind of stuff; that's very true. And for that I'm very thankful - that we have Basque Studies and a lot of the others.

And yet, you say you like the best of both worlds and I really think I have it.. I had my childhood upbringing that allowed me to be as Basque as I wanted to be, where I wanted to be. Yet, coming to town, I realized how fortunate I really was, because we took so much for granted. We didn't know any other way of life. And, then, once we moved to town and we were confined and supposedly

refined and restricted to so many things in what we could do and couldn't do, then, I really realized how lucky we were when we lived out in the country.

You could take the twenty-two and sit and shoot out twenty-five rounds in one evening, if you wanted, and nobody objected. Or you could go horseback riding or you could just... The world was your own to make of what you wanted. So, it has its good points and its bad points. But, the city has given me the chance to keep going and to make the commitments I've made, and to see the things I've seen.

I think when I really, really realized it, was (and my daughter was young at the time) when we went back to Washington D.C. and spent ten days doing Basque for the folklore festival in 1976. And to see those "Easterners" was just unbelievable. It was tremendous that we could be back there during the Bicentennial. But, the questions they asked! About ten thousand people went through that park everyday, and to stand and answer some of these questions after a while you just got to the point of, you know. Then you tell them that, "Well, what are you making?" "Chorizos." "Well, what are you stuffing it in?" "Casings." And, "Where do they come from?" And you explain to them that they're the intestines that have been cleaned, and they won't eat it. And I said, "What do you think sausages are stuffed in? Plastic casings?" I mean, granted, wienies are stuffed in them now. But they just - they would say "Basque" as if it was a disease. Because people back there have never had any contact with Basque people.

And it was ironic. There was only three and a half of us (I call my daughter a half, because she was only just a little girl at the time). But we were the smallest ethnic group there, yet by the end of the ten days, everybody knew the Basques, and everybody knew the chorizos. And I served more people out of our kitchen,

of the people who were there, because they were from the western United States, than our commissary did for all of us workers; because we didn't like sauerkraut and frankfurters and the kind of stuff they served us.

And I really, I think then, really realized what a privilege it was for us to grow up out here, where we learned to respect everybody for what they were and not who they were. And I can understand why so many easterners are the way they are, now. And Basque gave me that too, because without having lived the way I've lived and then been as educated as I did get, I wouldn't have had the opportunity to go back and work for the Smithsonian Institute during those ten days. So, I have to say I really do feel I have had the best of both worlds.

I had. a growing up in the country where it was neat and where everybody understood and yet my father realized that we needed a good education. So, when we came to town I did get the good education so that I could do what I loved best, and where my heart was, and that's what I've done. I got my degree in teaching and I taught for a couple of years. But my husband didn't particularly want me to work full time, so I gave that up, so I could spend a great deal of time, first with the Basque Studies Program, when Basque Studies was just small, and then, as NABO got started, and we got involved with our Reno Basque Club.

And kids, of course, have always been my thing, my bag, so I've always been involved in the Basque kids, in many different directions. And I push our NABO music camp and those kind of things for the kids because like I said, if we don't do it for the kids now, they won't have it. They won't have anything to fall back on and be proud of. And if we can't be proud of what we are, I think we're very unhappy people.

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